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Former CIA deputy says agency should free more of its data

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WASHINGTON—The Central Intelligence Agency should be able to make public much, if not most, of its research and analysis reports once CIA Director William Casey "rebuilds and reinvigorates" the agency, a former senior CIA official said yesterday.

Ray Cline, former deputy director of the CIA, told a luncheon meeting of scholars that such a public release of information would "benefit... university scholars, journalists, and citizens who need objective facts to guide them in thinking about pressing policy issues involving international developments."

Once Casey "rebuilds and reinvigorates the CIA's research and analysis capabilities and separates them from clandestine operations," Cline said, "he could then report his findings to the president and Cabinet on a secret basis, as now, but also could make from 50 to 75 percent of his reports available to Congress to improve legislative understanding."

"Moreover," Cline added, "where secret sources and methods are not involved, such reports could be released publicly."

Cline, who is now executive director of the Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies, addressed more than 100 scholars attending the Professors World Peace Academy seminar here.

The three-day PWPA conference addressed the theme, "U.S. Foreign Policy Options in the '80s." The PWPA is a project of the International Cultural Foundation, a non-profit organization founded by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon in 1968 to promote academic, scientific, religious and cultural exchange.

The CIA, Cline said, has the capability of providing a center for the advancement of knowledge and "sharing it on an open and voluntary exchange basis with interested citizenry."

"An open presidency should give this kind of public service and insure that it is as free from bias or political pressure as our census data or our economic statistics programs," he said.

But he added that secrecy is essential in many areas, especially concerning covert operations and information-gathering activities in other nations. Agents also need protection, he said.

"A nation cannot flourish in the back alleys of international intrigue without legal safeguards for its intelligence operators. Yet, to support friendly groups and frustrate hostile revolutionary forces abroad, these capabilities are often critical in shaping change in the global balance of power," Cline said.

President Reagan and Casey have an acute understanding of the importance of improving covert operations and keeping them secret, Cline said. Much of the responsibility in this area lies with Congress, which has oversight over the intelligence agencies.

The administration is seeking legislation that would exempt the CIA and other agencies from provisions of the Freedom of Information Act which, officials claim, has been abused by foreign governments to get U.S. secrets. The administration also wants to make disclosure of active agents' names illegal, thereby clamping down on the damage done by disgruntled former agents, such as Philip Agee, by printing names and addresses of agents abroad.

Dr. Morton Kaplan, professor of international relations at the University of Chicago and president of the PWPA conference, agreed with Casey's assessment, and added that intelligence-gathering operations are neither immoral nor unnecessary.

Preserve the peace

"Sometimes you have the choice of whether to send a diplomatic note or send in the Marines," Kaplan said. "You need good intelligence information to know what steps to take to preserve the peace."

If Casey is able to rebuild the intelligence community, and provide adequate protection to clandestine operations, Cline said, he could then turn to the "heart of the U.S. intelligence effort: research and analysis."

"This requires that the popular image of intelligence be changed by demonstrating that most of the work is neither illegal, immoral, incompatible with our free society, nor a limitation of the rights of U.S. citizens, but rather, academic," Cline explained.

"Intelligence is a sensitive, intensely personal world where morale, trust and confidence, as well as secrecy, are essential."

"An accurate understanding of international events and the purposes of national societies will make it possible not only to conduct American foreign policy skillfully but also to strengthen the free world by sharing information and exchanging views with U.S. friends and allies," he said.

The PWPA meeting will conclude with a briefing for congressional staffers on foreign policy matters today on Capitol Hill. Two major reports prepared for the conference and released over the weekend concern the crisis in El Salvador and Central America, and the Middle East situation and the prospects for peace between Israel and the Arab states.